

The Rich Girl who Teaches Poor Girls to Dance

FASHIONABLE debutantes have their equally fashionable dancing teachers and, both being fashionable, the former pay the latter fees in keeping with their mutually high estates.

Now, it appears the working girl—she of the factory, office and shop, even the sweat shop—has her dancing teacher too and is learning quite as much about the spring dance and its exuberance as her wealthier sister. And, reversing the custom, this dancing teacher for the poor girls is herself a debutante and a millionairess as well. Her "temple" is a quaint, cozy loft over a stable; her pupils come to her from work. And she pays most of the expenses from her own pocketbook. She declares that she can amuse herself in no better way than in bringing rhythm into the lives of working girls who otherwise would succumb to "jazz."

Stories are written about girls with less luminous eyes than Miss Beatrice Wanger, the wealthy young teacher, less earnest purpose, less philosophic grasp of life. She is, in fact, a "story book girl," from the unusual circumstances of her upbringing to the amazing purpose of her life and the way in which she proceeded to fulfill that purpose.

Climbing the steep, narrow stairway above the quaint old stable at 154 West Fifty-fifth street would not ordinarily lead to the suspicion that in the front studio, at the top of that flight, there would be found a young daughter of wealth and culture.

Nor would the beholder suspect that here in studio No. 1, with the great skylight and the smooth floor, this same young daughter of prosperity and high finance is literally putting over a revolutionary dance idea with the hope that she will teach to girl workers the true rhythm of life through their bodies.

Miss Beatrice Wanger was born in San Francisco, the birthplace of Isadora Duncan and of other dancers of fame, but her family is connected with New York financial kings and her mother's people all were natives of New York. She belongs to one of the most substantial and prosperous of New York's moneyed classes, but of that she begs that little be said.

"Talk of my work, my great hope," Miss Wanger insisted, when the topic of conversation was turned upon herself. "I do not care how much of an inheritance I have, and anything you say about it will only make a breach between my girls and me. I do not wish that. We are all girl workers. I work six hours a day."

Gowned in a simple but expensive black dress Miss Wanger stood with that manner of infinite repose, almost magnetic quiet, which is so much a part of her personality and told what she believed life was all about.

"My idea is the opposite of the jazz idea," she said. "Jazz jars. I hope, through the mind and the body, to create a rhythm of life in the girl so that everything she does will seem to be a part of the great universal scheme. You know how many girls lack poise. Jazz has a tendency to destroy poise. My plan is to encourage it. Poise helps us meet the problems of life; it holds us in leash; it gives us a saner viewpoint."

"It is the law of life to work," Miss Wanger explains. "I could not be contented living in ease and comfort on the labor of others. All of us have some great contribution to give to society, and mine, I hope, is a message for the rhythm of life, the control of the body with the mind, the use of beauty in our daily affairs."

"Those girls whose pride demands it pay for their lessons; the others who cannot afford it are not obliged to pay."

Tracing Heirs to England's "Lost Money"

THERE is treasure in London awaiting the taking. Millions of pounds of "lost money" is hidden away in the Government treasury, and so far as is known nobody owns it. Every three years the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in London issues a long list of the various funds in court to which there are no known claimants.

These funds have come into the court in different ways, some of them in large amounts, some in small, and in every case the money is the legal property of some person, but the identity of the owner is unknown. These amounts, collectively, are known as "the dormant funds." The money has been accumulating for 200 years.

"The dormant funds" have been the basis for the springing up in London of a

I have found out many things in my work on the East Side," Miss Wanger says. "I went down there and learned that lovely flowers sometimes bloom in ugly soil, and I found that it would be a privilege for me to give what I knew of the beauty and rhythm of life to these girls who are giving the substance of life by their labor."

One of the most remarkable things about Miss Wanger is the method she uses in working out her idea that all of life is a rhythm and that the body, through the mind, can develop that rhythm and thus put the whole personality of a man or woman or girl in tune with the universe. Her method was to

live on the East Side, where she worked for two years with girls in settlement houses. "After I had seen them in their native soil," she says, "I felt prepared to teach them, and I opened a studio."

In six years this lovely, dark haired young woman has taught 2,000 girls not only to dance but to adjust themselves to life, to attain poise and to acquire some comprehension of the beauty and meaning of the great world of beauty that is only waiting for them to adventure into.

Miss Wanger is a former pupil of Isadora Duncan, and from that world famous classic dancer, she says she received priceless gems of thought and

The authority on which the "dormant funds" are held is in an act of Parliament of 1723.

If a person thinks he or she is the legal heir to a part of the funds it is still very difficult to get it. Frequently old ladies write in and inclose some such proof as a copy of a letter written by a father or a grandfather, asserting that his heirs could get £50,000 by writing to the court. This is too little proof.

After all, the best way to get money out of the "dormant fund," if it is due, is to put the matter into the hands of the professional treasure hunters. They know that fuller proofs are required.

Now and then attempts by fraud are employed, but such efforts are rarely successful.

Physical Rhythm Needed in Shops as Well as Drawing Rooms, She Thinks—and Spends Her Own Money About It

The large photograph at the left is of Miss Beatrice Wanger, the heiress, who is devoting her time to teaching dancing to poor girls. In the oval is one of her pupils. Below is a group of her students resting between exercises.



body development in conjunction with mental expression.

"I longed to express beauty as a girl," Miss Wanger explained. "I had an opportunity to do so. I was, of course, sent East to school. I found out that there were means of attuning yourself to life. So many girls and women do not understand this and perhaps that is why their lives are so constantly at cross purposes."

"Of all the girls I knew no one class, it seemed to me, so much needed help in adjustment as the girls who work in millinery stores, in sweatshops, department stores and offices. Many times these young women are far superior to their environments or to what their environments mean to them. They are restless, because unconsciously their woman natures are seeking to express

the beauty that lies there and so often is given no medium of expression—rather put out of harmony by ill advised gaiety and the whirl and stir of mere excitement unaccompanied by any inner response.

"And this training, I believe, also helps girls to find their vocations. It gives them means of expressing themselves and removes shyness."

In short, every night at 6 o'clock, when her class comes trooping up the stairs, Miss Wanger begins what might be termed a process of "soul development."

In a corner of the studio over the batik covered tea table sits a small victrola. As the little workers from New York's stores

and restaurants and factories pour in with weariness on their faces she starts the machine. The delicate, wistful strains of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" float up to the high ceiling and to the dressing room on the balcony. The girls take off their hats. Already the repose of the studio and of Miss Wanger has influenced them. Ten minutes pass. They have removed their dusty workday clothing and have donned filmy green and pink and orchid draperies, chiffon and cheese-cloth and crepe de chine, whatever the particular girl could buy, with the gentle suggestion of Miss Wanger.

With their hair loosened, their bodies draped with flowing garments of lovely colors, they float down to the dance floor and begin to fall naturally and gracefully into reclining postures on the floor. Then Miss Wanger stops the ripple of the "Spring Song" and begins to talk. This is to put their minds into rhythm with beauty. She tells them of books, of pictures and of music. She explains what was in the mind of Mendelssohn and of all the great musicians such as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Liszt when they created out of their emotions and their minds matchless tones of beauty to make the world sweeter and better. Every movement, whether it be that on a typewriter or on a hat frame; whether it be in serving food from a tray or stamping bills in a cashier's cage, may be graceful and in harmony, she explains. All this, Miss Wanger believes, tends to a greater efficiency in work and to a better adjustment to all forms of service.

They sit and absorb her talk. Tall girls, short girls, wistful eyed girls and girls with sullen faces; frowny and neat girls and some only a generation removed from the Old World, all listen and prepare for their lesson in philosophic dancing, if that term can describe in any adequate way Miss Wanger's work. Each one is tired when she enters. Each one now is beginning to revive.

And then they rise and fall into the gentle, zephyrlike motions of the dance as Miss Wanger joins them, stopping now and then to speak a quiet word to a girl, a hint on arm movement to another, a smile of encouragement to a shy little wallflower not yet accustomed to the floating draperies and to the sight of her fine young legs flashing in and out with other girls in undulating and delicate motion.

"Quiet, now," murmurs Miss Wanger. And the soothing quality of her voice falls like a blessing on the young heads that so recently have been bent in ugly and grim tasks necessary for the earning of bread.

When the lessons are over the girls cook their meals on the gas stove in the kitchenette and Miss Wanger cooks hers with them. They dine from plates insecurely poised on their knees.

"I could tackle another dozen hats," the little millinery apprentice says when she takes her first sip of tea.

Miss Wanger is interested in her girls and in how their lessons in philosophic dancing are helping them solve the problems of their lives. She pointed to one girl.

"That girl lost her job to-day," she explained. "She was despondent when she came in. She was absolutely unfitted to tackle the problem of life and to start again on the upward grind. Watch her. Her courage is coming back."

The girl was the center of a group of girls dancing the "Ave Maria." With a look of infinite repose and confidence she sank upon the floor with the final note of the music in an attitude of utter, rapt adoration.

"It is really a little home we have here for these working girls," Miss Wanger says. "On Saturdays we have tea. I teach from 6 to 12 every night and go home healthfully tired, but not fagged."

"It is less tiring than bridge parties or flirting or shopping and much more interesting. Don't you suppose that the development of these hungry young souls is more fascinating than a devotion to my own privileges of parties and frequent extensions of the wardrobe?"

Miss Wanger is something of a proselyte. She wants to convert other girls of wealth and prosperity to her way of thinking.

"Every girl ought to work hard," she says. "If she has one accomplishment she ought to work hard to pass it on. It may be needlework; it may be music; it may be domestic science. She could give lectures on household arts and hold classes in needlework."

The lovely, dark head of Miss Wanger is full of stories of what has become of her pupils; all of them interesting. One girl went to London and became a sensation, though that is far from the object of Miss Wanger's training. She is not, she insists, in the business of making Pavlovas, but in the business of making lovely womanhood in tune with life able to meet life's problems and enjoying some of the rare and plentiful beauty of life.

An example of the effect of this purpose is to be found in one young woman who became a show girl in a revue. But she remained only one season. She returned to Miss Wanger and said she did not like the atmosphere of the revue. It was too hectic, she said, and too full of excitement. This summer that girl has a position as a teacher of dancing at Woodstock.

Other effects of the training are a substitution of firmness for looseness, and Miss Wanger hopes that this embraces character as well as physical poise; a new appreciation of poise and rhythm and a love for what is beautiful and fine, rather than for what is ugly and sordid. And so the dark eyed young heiress floats among these developing young girls, giving balm and beauty and character. "Not the rant of jazz, but the rhythm of life," is her message she says.

AT a country club near Chicago there is employed a novel mode of electric lighting. It appears that there are two garden foyers which form the terminus of the promenade, each of which measures thirty-six feet by seventy-two feet. The high arched ceilings are tinted a faint sky blue.

The light is all supplied from a seven foot pedestal which contains two 500 watt gas filled tungsten lamps in silvered mirror reflectors. Harsh shadows and glare are avoided with this indirect system of lighting, and every detail of the decorations has been clearly brought out.